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# The Gold(smith) Standard

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## The Gold(smith) Standard

*Daniel S. Medwed\**

My wonderful dean at the University of Utah, Hiram Chodosh, often likes to talk about recruiting “triple threats” to the law faculty, academics who are skilled at the three chief components of the job: teaching, scholarship, and service. I am fortunate to have a number of such “triple threats” on my own faculty. These colleagues provide exceptional guidance. I was also fortunate to have a role model at what our former football coach Urban Meyer famously called the “school down south”: Brigham Young University law professor Michael Goldsmith.

Michael was a true “triple threat,” although perhaps not in the areas that he most often dreamed about (pitching, hitting, and base running). His scholarly contributions to our understanding of federal criminal law will stand the test of time; his talent in the classroom led to not one, not two, but *six* “Professor of the Year” awards at BYU; and his service to the Rocky Mountain Innocence Center and the fight against Lou Gehrig’s disease, among other activities, reflect the depth of his character and commitment to others. Indeed, I met Michael through our service as fellow members of the Board of Directors for the Rocky Mountain Innocence Center, a nonprofit organization located in Salt Lake City dedicated to investigating and litigating post-conviction claims of innocence by prisoners in Nevada, Wyoming, and Utah. Even as Michael battled against the ravages of his illness, he contributed significantly to the organization as well as to the work of the National Innocence Network, an umbrella organization that represents the interests of the various individual innocence projects in the United States.

I think Michael’s devotion to the cause of justice is exemplified by the following anecdote. I currently serve as co-chair of the amicus committee of the National Innocence Network. The committee tracks cases across the nation, determines whether the Network should weigh in on a particular case, and identifies attorneys interested in writing amicus briefs without compensation. The most

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burdensome aspect of the committee's work is not necessarily pinpointing the best cases or even finding brief-writers, but enlisting the help of academics familiar with innocence issues to provide oversight and to review drafts of the briefs generated by our pro bono allies. To that end, I not infrequently send out e-mails to innocence project LISTSERVs asking for assistance with this laborious task. Perhaps unsurprisingly, my entreaties are often met with silence. But, less than six weeks before his death, Michael wrote the following reply to one of my requests:

Dan,

I'm struggling w/ some serious health issues, but put me on your list and i'll do.

pls give me as much advance notice as possible. best, m

I wrote him back expressing my utmost thanks. As is so often the case, though, I left much unsaid. Now it feels too late. Nevertheless, I would like to take this opportunity to write what I wish I had written:

Dear Michael,

Thank you not just for doing this, but for all that you do. Thank you for being such a great role model—to generations of law students and to a fellow criminal law professor teaching and writing a few miles up the road. You are a true “triple threat,” a star in teaching, scholarship, and service. And, most of all, thank you for showing all of us how to live and work with dignity even under the most adverse of circumstances.

All the best, Dan